## REMARKS

This communication is a full and timely response to the aforementioned final Office Action dated May 16, 2007. By this communication, claims 1-4, 6, 8, 12 and 14 are amended. Reexamination and reconsideration of the application are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

### I. Allowed Claims

Applicant thanks the Examiner for kindly allowing claims 5, 9-11, 13 and 15. No amendments have been made to allowed claims 5, 9-11, 13 and 15.

### II. Interview

Applicant thanks the Examiner for kindly conducting the interview with Applicant's undersigned representative on September 13, 2007. The Examiner agreed that the proposed amended claims forwarded to the Examiner are patentable over Kageyama (U.S. Application Publication 2002/001868).

The amendments to claims 1-4, 6, 8, 12 and 14 herein are identical to the proposed amendments forwarded to the Examiner. The reasons for the patentability of these claims, as initially presented in the interview, are summarized below.

### III. Support for Features in Claims

Independent claims 1, 12 and 14 have been amended to recite the "first equipment" as a "first image forming apparatus for forming an image on a sheet, and to recite the "second equipment" as a "second image forming apparatus for forming an image on a sheet."

In the Office Action, the Examiner requested Applicant to point out a specific section of the specification that describes the "second equipment" as an image forming apparatus for forming an image on a sheet. The following representative examples of the disclosure of the specification provide that the "second equipment" is an image forming apparatus for forming an image on a sheet.

a. Page 15, lines 4-7: "In the embodiments, a copying machine is exemplified as the image forming apparatus; however, the image forming apparatus may be other devices such as a printer and a facsimile machine."

b. Page 15, lines 15-18: "As shown in Fig. 1, a system for managing a copying machine according to the first embodiment includes: copying machines 4a, 4b, 4c installed on user sides."

c. Page 16, lines 19-20: "The copying machines 4a, 4b, 4c respectively reproduce an image of an original document onto paper."

Claims 1, 12 and 14 also each recite that management information of the second image forming apparatus is transmitted, together with the trouble information about the first image forming apparatus, to the centralized management apparatus. In the Office Action, the Examiner requested Applicant to point out a section of the specification which describes the management information that is transmitted to the centralized management apparatus.

The following representative examples of the disclosure of the specification describe the components of management information for an image forming apparatus.

a. In lines 23-25 on page 19, the specification provides that "[t]he management data include the various counter values and the detected various element data which have been described above."

b. Examples of the counter values are described in line 25 on page 16 to line 11 on page 17. Examples of the various element data are described in lines 15-25 on page 17.

c. Additional descriptions of the management information are presented in lines 16-23 on page 22, lines 10-15 on page 23, and lines 8-12 on page 28, for example.

## IV. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-4, 6, 8, 12 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kageyama. Applicant respectfully submits that's claims 1-4, 6, 8, 12 and 14 are patentable over Kageyama for the following reasons.

Claim 1 recites an equipment management apparatus for transmitting management information collected from a plurality of equipment to a centralized management apparatus. Claim 1 recites that the equipment management apparatus comprises a detector for detecting a trouble which has occurred in a first image forming apparatus for forming an image on a sheet.

Claim 1 also recites that the equipment management apparatus comprises a transmission controller for, when the trouble is detected by the detector, transmitting management information about a second image forming apparatus for forming an image on a sheet, which is independent from the first image forming apparatus, together with the trouble information about the first image forming apparatus to the centralized management apparatus.

Claim 12 recites an equipment management system comprising the equipment management apparatus recited in claim 1. Claim 14 recites an equipment management method comprising steps corresponding to the operations of the equipment management apparatus recited in claims 1 and 12.

Kageyama discloses a printing system including a printer 200, a first computer 300 and a second computer 400. The printer 200 and first computer 300 are connected to the second computer 400 via networks 110 and 120 (see Figure 1).

The printer 200 includes a printer controller 2100 and a printer engine 2200. The printer controller 2100 controls and manages the printing status of the printer engine 2200, and the printer engine 2200 processes data to be printed. The printer controller 2100 includes an individual printer management part 2120 and an individual printer information DB part 2121 for managing the printer engine 2200. The individual printer management part 2120 retrieves operation information stored in the individual printer information DB part 2121 (see paragraphs [0037] and [0040]-[0042], and Figures 2 and 10).

The second computer 400 is a manufacturing service center for servicing a plurality of printers sold by a manufacturer including the printer 200 (see paragraphs [0038] and [0061]). The second computer 400 includes a total printer management service processing part 4120 and a total printer management information DB part 4130. The total printer management information DB part 4130 stores management

information for all printers managed by the second computer 400, i.e., the plurality of printers including the printer 200 produced by the same manufacturer (see paragraph [0060] and Figure 11).

The printer engine 200 detects the occurrence of trouble, and the printer controller 2120 receives information on the occurrence of trouble in the printer engine 2200 from the printer engine 2200 (see paragraphs [0078]-[0079]). Then, the first computer 300 receives the trouble information from the printer controller 2100. In response to receiving the trouble information, the first computer 300 issues an inquiry to the printer controller 2100 as to a method of solving the trouble in the printer engine 2200 (see paragraph [0081]). The printer controller 2100 transmits the inquiry from the first computer 300 to the total printer management service processing part 4120 of the second computer 400 (see paragraph [0082]).

In response to receiving the inquiry, the total printer management service processing part 4120 refers to the management information stored in the total printer management information DB 4130 to obtain a solution to the trouble in the printer engine 2200 (see paragraph [0083]). The total printer management service processing part 4120 then transmits a reply to the printer controller 2100, which then transmits the received reply to the first computer 300 informing the user of the first computer how to address the trouble in the printer engine 2200 (see paragraph [0086]).

Accordingly, in the printing system of Kageyama, the user of the first computer 300 obtains a way to cope with the trouble in the printer engine 200 by issuing a request through the printer 200, which in turn forwards the request to the second computer 400. The second computer 400 then replies to the printer 200 with information on how to address the trouble in the printer engine 2200.

However, when the printer controller 2100 transmits the trouble information to the second computer 400, the printer controller 2100 does not transmit management information of another printer. Instead, the printer controller 2100 transmits only the trouble information (inquiry) of the printer engine 2200 to the second computer 400.

As noted above, Kageyama discloses that management information is stored for a plurality of printers in the second computer 400. However, the management information is stored so that the total printer management service processing part

4120 can transmit a responsive reply to the printer controller 2100 when the printer controller 2100 transmits only the trouble information (inquiry) of its printer to the second computer 400.

A fundamental distinction between the claimed invention and Kageyama is that the printer controller 2100 does not transmit management information of another printer (image forming apparatus) when the printer controller 2100 transmits the trouble information of its printer to the second computer 400. Furthermore, the printer controller 2100 is clearly not an image forming apparatus for forming an image on a sheet. Therefore, the printer controller 200 cannot correspond to the second image forming apparatus recited in claims 1, 12 and 14.

Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that Kageyama does not disclose or suggest that when a trouble which has occurred in a first image forming apparatus is detected, management information about a second image forming apparatus, which is independent from the first transmitting apparatus, is transmitted together with the trouble information about the first image forming apparatus, as recited in claims 1, 12 and 14.

Consequently, Kageyama fails to disclose or suggest each and every limitation of claims 1, 12 and 14.

Furthermore, in view of the clear distinctions discussed above, Applicant respectfully submits that one skilled in the art would not have been motivated to modify Kageyama in such a manner as to result in, or otherwise render obvious, the inventions of claims 1, 12 and 14.

Therefore, for at least the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1, 12 and 14, as well as claims 2-4, 6 and 8 which depend therefrom, are clearly patentable over Kageyama.

## IV. Conclusion

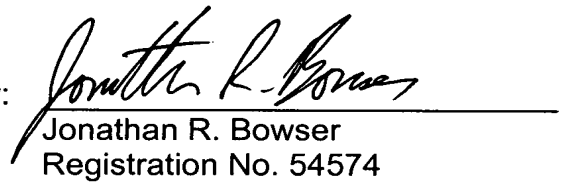
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is clearly in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicant requests a favorable examination and consideration of the instant application.

If, after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner feels there are any issues remaining which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned by telephone in order to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL & ROONEY PC

Date: September 17, 2007

By: 
Jonathan R. Bowser
Registration No. 54574

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, VA 22313-1404
703 836 6620